

5 REASONS WHY MANY
TALENTED, SUCCESSFUL
PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO FIND
BALANCE AND MEANING
– AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT TODAY



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SUCCESS COACHING

5 Reasons Why Many Talented, Successful People Struggle to Find Balance and Meaning – And What You Can Do About It Today

- If you've decided it's time to make some shifts in your business and your life so that you find the fulfillment you seek...
- If you are ready to make impact that you know is possible for you with your customers, your family and friends, and in your community...
- If you're ready to experience greater health, happiness – and even to thrive – in all areas of your life....

This report is for you!

We live in a world of constant distraction. 24/7 emails, texts, calls, tweets, alerts, feeds and more... not to mention life's more precious events. Every one of us experiences this to some degree. So, how is it that some people seem to stay energized and even thrive while many of us are more often overwhelmed and overloaded?

In my years of leading teams and coaching business owners, I have seen many successful managers, entrepreneurs, team members and leaders struggle with this.

I know many professionals and successful entrepreneurs – and their team members – who have been fighting for too long just to keep their head above water and really want to live life more fully, make time for and be more present to themselves and their loved ones, and truly awaken their overall experience and impact in the world.

It's hard to watch some of the most successful, creative entrepreneurs, managers and contributors struggle to have the career or business they dream of - or make the impact they want to make in the world - while *also* balancing a healthy, loving relationship with loved ones as well as their own health, happiness and wellbeing.

- If you've tried time management and productivity systems but are still feeling overwhelmed or doubting that you'll ever "catch up" - much less thrive...
- If you are tired of seeing other people make more of an impact than you know is possible for you with your customers, your family and friends, in your community...
- If you've put time and effort toward your own wellbeing but still find your stress levels are too high, meaning your own health, happiness or maybe even your primary relationships are suffering...

I can relate. I've been there.

For those of you that don't know me well, I'd succeeded in building a solid business as a strategic consultant, project manager and team lead helping large organizations and institutions successfully build teams, allocate appropriate technologies and launch complex technology projects... on time, on budget and to spec.

I was good at it.

But after a decade in the corporate world, I was feeling overwhelmed, overworked, and worn out most of the time and generally not as happy as I could be. I wasn't making the impact I knew that I could make in the world. I didn't have the energy for my most valuable relationships. And I wasn't living the life I felt drawn to live. All the while I was working as a strategic consultant, project manager and team lead helping large organizations and institutions successfully build teams, allocate appropriate technologies and launch complex technology projects... on time, on budget and to spec.

Now I have a successful business – along with a supportive team - that allows me the time I need to take better care of my physical, mental, emotional and spiritual priorities while putting attention into those relationships which are most important – and spending time on those things which inspire me... from travel, art and film to yoga, running, giving back to the community and just being in nature.

I was fortunate to grow up with parents who emphasized the importance of health in all areas – mental, social, spiritual as well as physical health. And although I didn't always appreciate their guidance at the time, as an adult, I've spent decades reading and studying just about everything there is to study about personal and spiritual growth, fulfillment and happiness... not to mention professional programs on technologies, project management, leadership and coaching as I developed and grew my own business.

Yet for so many years, I “got it” intellectually but I wasn't “living it” experientially. And we're always growing (one of the beautiful and fortunate things about this life!) I've been able to experience significant – and lasting - shifts by doing intentional work that allows me to live a life that feels more aligned with my values and purpose in the world. A life where I feel energized and engaged... alive.

How to Use This Report for Your Maximum Benefit

This report was written with the goal of helping you first acknowledge what keeps you in a life where you know more is possible... more happiness, fulfillment, contentment, well-being, even love... and yet you struggle to take the first steps.

We all have blind spots that keep us in place despite telling ourselves, “I want to make changes so I have [you fill in the blank here]....more time for my friends and family, my health, my hobbies, my travel” and yet a significant amount of change doesn't occur... or you DO make changes for a short period of time but those change don't stick. This can leave you in a pattern of day-in and day-out feeling overwhelmed and overworked or feeling like a more fulfilling existence is possible for you. And even if you are taking vacations and time off – deep down it's not as relaxing or fulfilling as it could be. You know there is something more.

As you read each of the reasons below – notice if you feel that you fall into any of these traps – or if you quickly dismiss one by telling yourself “I’m aware of this and have it under control.” Also, pay attention to a strong emotional reaction – such as “this is definitely not me!” We call them blind spots for a reason!

In fact, it’s more than likely that you’ll find at least one reason which you dismiss as not you which is, in fact, very much you. To help you get past this, I encourage you to share this report with a friend or trusted colleague and ask them for their candid feedback as to what they observe in you. We can all use a little help and support to see ourselves clearly in order to move past whatever is blocking us.

Try to be honest with yourself – and at the same time be gentle.

We – all of us – have parts of ourselves that we accept and parts of ourselves that we struggle to accept or that we even reject outright. We all have access to both ends of the spectrum in any area: whether it’s aggression/passivity, impatience/patience, greed/ generosity, defensiveness/ openness, dependence/independence, and the list goes on.

Most of us suppress certain parts of ourselves. We may have learned or were taught along the way that these are not acceptable or are even “bad” – or we may have lost touch with some parts of ourselves (like the part of you that used to play in a band back when you “had the time”) that we’d like to re-connect with.

The goal here is to begin to identify those areas that are keeping you from what you know deep down is possible – a life where you excel at your chosen profession while also experiencing good health and free time as you choose to spend it...with your family and friends, giving back to your community, traveling the world or simply finding more time to “stop and smell the roses.” Maybe your first goal is to carve out enough time to get the sleep your body needs. Regardless of where you’re starting, you deserve to create a life – and a career – that you love.

Connect with Me

I would love to hear your own experiences, feedback and questions once you’ve read this report. Please reach out anytime via social media or email to: shannon@shannonjamescoaching.com.

Reason #1: Now is not the right time.

If I just get through this [fill in the blank:] next quarter, final project launch, busy season at the office, etc.; I will make some changes. But for now, I need to buckle down and get what needs doing done. Besides, if I back off now, then I’ll risk dropping the ball and not closing the new account or launching the project on time or meeting my deadlines I’ve committed to the team, my organization, my business, my customers.

The challenge for most talented, successful people is that you are making a contribution, and so you are in demand - and probably have been for a very long time, possibly with very little break. And the tendency is that this rarely lets up on its own. There may be busier seasons and slightly less busy seasons, but your team needs your time, your customers (internal and external) need your time, your family and friends need – and want - your time and attention year round. And while it's true that good timing and being in a place where you pay attention to your gut instinct/inner guidance/intuition, is important to consider... the reality is that there is rarely ever a “convenient” time to begin to make changes.

If this sounds familiar, I encourage you to take a quiet moment and ask yourself what it's costing you to keep doing what you're doing. Especially if you think you don't have time to! Write it down. Give yourself a moment to absorb it. And then consider one small change you would be willing and able to make right now – and commit to trying it long enough that you give yourself a chance to experience results.

One of the most notable features of Kaizen, the Japanese practice of continuous improvement, is that *big results come from many small changes accumulated over time*.¹ (The science on how long it takes to change a habit varies based on what you're actually trying to change and how ingrained it is – but there is solid agreement on one thing for sure: repeat, repeat, repeat until it becomes more like second nature.)

I've worked for almost two decades as a technology project manager for large scale implementations lasting one, two years or longer. And I can tell you that at the start of those projects, it is natural to feel overwhelmed. And yet when you begin to break the project into phases and those phases into smaller components, and then the components down to specific tasks assigned to specific team members – until you can't break the tasks into smaller components (a best and sometimes underused practice in the profession), you find you have a plan with many small, *manageable* steps that will lead to *big* changes.

This is a foundation of the process that I've used for almost two decades to lead organizations big and small to successfully launch large scale initiatives. It's also a foundation of the framework I use to help guide individuals to achieve lasting change – changes they've often sought for years, and changes that have eluded them for just as long.

Change can – and almost assuredly will! – be uncomfortable and even scary at times.

It's unfamiliar territory and our reptilian brains, focused on our survival, want to step in to protect us from risk and uncertainty. From the brain's perspective, we are alive and this is good – so why change? This can translate into putting the brakes onto even those healthy fears... fears that are actually a leading indicator of an area where we have opportunity to grow.

So as you experiment with this, give yourself full permission to do it at your own pace – and to be extra kind with yourself in the process. And remember: if not now, when?

Reason #2: I am overwhelmed and don't know where to start.

I am overwhelmed. I know that I need/want/deserve to make some changes but I really don't know where to start.

- Do you ever have that feeling that there are so many items on your “to-do” list that you get paralyzed?
- Do you find yourself thinking you can't possibly accomplish them all, and yet there's nothing you immediately see that you can afford to drop?
- Or that you are crossing things off your list but it's not going to be possible to ever get them all done by the time they need to be done – and manage to get enough sleep at night or tend to other basic needs in your personal life?

If you feel your life is spinning out of control, start by stopping. Seriously. I encourage you to stop for as long as you possibly can. This may mean 5 minutes of deep, slow breathing at your desk, postponing a lunch meeting (if you must) so you can step outside for a 20 or 30 minute walk, asking your partner to take the kids to school so you can take a morning yoga class, finding an hour to treat yourself to a massage, allowing yourself to sleep in on Sunday or even taking a whole day off.

**Do whatever you can do – as quickly as possible
– to help you push *PAUSE*.**

Use this time to regroup – not to focus on your to-do list. In fact, do whatever it takes to set aside all of your to-dos. You may need to remind yourself that the world won't end while you're doing this, and that's ok. Figure out what's needed in order for you to pause.

It is when this seems like the most impossible or absurd suggestion that it is the most important thing you can do to begin to shift. There is a lot of research behind this including the fact that a change in your physiological state (aka taking some deep breaths, getting a healing massage or getting your body moving through exercise) will help quickly shift your emotional state. When you are overwhelmed, it's important that you make this shift – as quickly as possible - so that you can begin to make plans, decisions and take actions from a more calm and centered place. Otherwise, you'll continue to create (and yes, we're all creators) more of the same.

Once you've done this, then make – or re-make - your list. Make a list of all the things you have to do, pick one thing and do it. Take an action. When you complete the task, cross it off your list. Reward yourself by doing something that makes you feel good.

Reason #3: I'm not sure what I want anymore.

I'm so focused on keeping it all together – my business, my career, my relationship, my family, my social life, my community engagements – and have been for long enough that I'm not really sure what I want any more. I have so many responsibilities and am pulled in so many different directions that I've lost sight of what's important to me, maybe even what feels most authentic to me.

It's surprisingly easy to get off track with your own personal and professional priorities in the midst of the everyday busy-ness of running your business, managing your career, spending time with your family and friends, trying to carve out a bit of space for exercise and down time... that weeks, months, even years can go by without an honest look at whether all the effort you are making is even moving you generally in the direction you want to go.

As you grow and change, you may find that the trajectory you'd started on is no longer quite the one you want to continue down... shifting and adjusting is natural as we go through life. So it's important to take the time to tune into what really matters to you so that when you take action, you're taking those actions that are most likely to move you in the direction you want to go. Ask yourself:

Are the actions you take today creating the future you want tomorrow?

This is why it's all the more important for you to carve out a few minutes for yourself – daily will provide the most impact – to check in. For some of us, this process may be easy. But for others, it can be very frustrating and even confusing at times to get clear on your vision. Especially, if your vision doesn't fit a particular way of being that you may have learned from family, schooling or society.

If you're struggling with where to start, consider this simple exercise to instantly find more clarity. It's based on the idea that through contrast – experiencing those things we don't want in our lives – we can get clear on what we *DO* want. So the idea behind this exercise is to bring to mind something in your life that you do not want (contrast).

Notice how easy it is to do this. Now you're going to use this contrast to help get clear on what it is you do want:

1. Choose one area of your life that you feel stuck or unsure of what you want. Maybe it's your career path, your weight, your primary relationship... or even start smaller – with one decision you're trying to make at the office like whether to take on a new project or client.
2. Find a sheet of paper (yep, pull it off the printer stack if needed), draw a line down the center. Label the left column "Contrast" and the right column "Clarity."
3. In the left column, list all the things you don't like and wish to avoid about the situation or circumstance. Keep jotting them down until you have no more.
4. Now in the right column, write a contrasting or opposite statement for each item you listed at the left.
5. After spending some time getting clear on what you do want, turn the list in your right column into a statement about what you want. I encourage you to write this in the present tense.

As a simple example, let's say you're thinking about a move. You know you're not happy where you are, but you're not quite sure what you're looking for. Some of your "contrast" might include: "Noisy street" "Limited storage space" "no off-street parking" "small kitchen" "must drive to train" "distance to nature" etc. In the right column or "Clarity" column, you'd then write the opposite: "Quiet street" "Lots of storage space" "garage" "spacious kitchen" "short walk to train" "short bike to park" etc.

A few statements based on what you do want could include: I love knowing that I live on a quiet street in a home with a spacious kitchen and lots of storage space. Or – I'm in the process of locating a home with a garage that is near a park and has a short walk to the train.

I personally use this exercise regularly to help me hone in on my vision for big and small things... whether it's a project launch, an upcoming vacation, or even for a customer meeting. What's particularly fun about this is when you start to notice how more and more things unfold along the lines of – or even better than - your vision for what you do want. Things will flow much more easily to you once you are clear about what you want – as will the day-to-day decisions you're making.²

Reason #4: Everyone is depending on me.

There are so many people depending on me that my time is not my own. I feel I have no space and I am constantly interrupted. Every time I decide on a new goal and then carve out the time to get it done, the phone rings or I get an urgent customer request or an email that really needs to be responded to or my child is sick. And because I'm the business owner/team lead/ manager/top producer/parent, everyone seems to need my time and assistance.

I get up, feed my family, walk the dogs, rush to the office where I am busy in back-to-back meetings and on phone calls or trying to catch up on email then I pick up the kids from soccer practice and try to get everyone a meal cooked at a decent time before bath time, bedtime and then I am exhausted. Just getting through the tasks of my day-to-day routine leaves me little energy – mentally, physically or otherwise.

If you find yourself in this place, take a moment to ask if you feel you have to do it all yourself in order for it to get done right? When you're talented and successful, you often are really good at getting lots of things done. Believe me when I say that I can relate to this one. Please challenge yourself here. Do you really have to do it all? Insisting on doing everything yourself can burden you while preventing others on your team, in your family, in your tribe, from feeling valued and needed.

Many clients tell me that they give in to sudden requests because they don't want to let others down. Consider if it might also be about not disappointing yourself: let's face it, most of us want to feel needed. If we take an honest look at ourselves, ask: *"Is there anywhere I am unwittingly encouraging people to come to me for things that could be handled just as well – or better - by someone else?"* OR, *"Am I unclear on my priorities and, well, so darn disorganized that I figure I better handle this now because if not now, it may never get done?"*

While it's important to be reasonably accessible to those that you live and work with – you want to avoid spending most of your hours in helper mode at the expense of completing your own critical, priority tasks. These tasks may be related to building a new service line in your business, carving out

three days a week to exercise, or just getting home in time for dinner with your family on weeknights.

Try this deceptively simple exercise – starting with something that is important to you but not at the very top of your list of those things you want to do but get interrupted doing. Let's say you want to meditate for 5 minutes each day. Put the time on your calendar and treat it as if it were a meeting with a very important customer. Would you move that off your calendar? Who is more important than you?

A first step here may be to delegate more – both at home and at work so that you free yourself and your time to put your energy toward those things you love and at which you excel.

Take an inventory of the typical tasks that you do on an average weekday and consider which of those activities brings you joy, helps you be more alive and present in your day. These are the things you want to keep on your list. What activities feel like a drag, even on a good day? Or maybe are not even things that you're actually very good at doing? Could an assistant help out with those?

Personally, I strongly dislike running errands – those day-to-day activities that can take up hours over the course of the week.... Going to the post office, the bank, the dry cleaners, picking up odds and ends at the pharmacy or grocery. For years, I would oscillate between spending Saturdays running around town or having the list of errands hang over me during the week until I traded an hour of exercise for an hour of knocking some errands off the list. Until one day a respected colleague and fellow business owner mentioned that he'd always had a "runner" in the family business – someone who took care of most of these weekly tasks freeing up time for he and the other managers of the business to focus on those things only they could do.

At the time, it seemed like a somewhat luxurious expenditure that I struggled to justify but from the moment I gave it a try, I never looked back. No longer do I worry about having time to pick up the ingredients to cook a new dish at home... I've got help to be sure that I have the items I need so I can enjoy the time to actually cook (and enjoy) the dish with loved ones. What a difference!

Reason #5: I don't have the time.

I just don't have the time to exercise, write that book, take a vacation, manage my budget, spend Sunday with my family, or otherwise take care of my own health and live my life in the way I'd like to – and keep everything else going. *Period.* In order to keep a strong reputation professionally, deliver value to my customers and team, be a good parent to my children, a loving partner ... not to mention keeping up with social and community engagements –something has to give. And usually that something comes down to me or to my "nonessentials."

There are variations on what “gives.” Too often the “nonessentials” really are essentials that we all need on a physical level in order to be productive, alert, awake and more alive. It may be less sleep than you need to have optimal energy and focus the next day, regular physical exercise so that you feel good in your body, preparing (or arranging for) healthy, energizing and healing foods so that you are more alert and alive, daily personal downtime for meditation so that you can use both your intuition as well as your intellect for decision making -- or just finding a moment of quiet to regroup so that you can regain focus.

Whatever it is for you, over time, this definitely takes a toll on our day-to-day experience (in other words, our L-I-F-E). You easily end up overwhelmed, tired and lacking energy and focus (or relying on caffeine and other substances for energy). You may find that you just don't have the energy for those things you used to enjoy doing in your free time. Or you may even become physically ill.

We may even take a vacation here and there but find that our time away is just enough to help us keep our head above water and buoy us when we return. And, in the extreme, you can find that you've lost yourself somewhere in the effort to take care of everything else for everyone else (see Reason #3).

The reality is that we make time for what is important to us.

So, if you take an honest look at what you are choosing to spend your time on, you will find those things that – at some point – you decided were important to you. Take a moment to note this and acknowledge (without judgment) that this is what you are choosing today.

If you don't like the results you're getting in one or several areas of your life, it's important that you do take the time to re-assess and put your time on other priorities. Next, take the actions to follow those priorities through to completion.

Sounds straightforward and you've probably heard this before, right? Intellectually most of us get it. The challenge is in actually *doing* it. Especially in a world with more and more interruptions where we're often taught that to be successful, we need to multi-task. And we often revere those “success stories” of those who work hard to create something from the ground up and are high producers.

To avoid a whirlwind of multi-tasking where you start many things and finish only a few, it is essential to prioritize. And if you catch yourself saying I know, I know... or I do prioritize... and yet you're not getting the results you want, it's time to re-assess.

**If you don't make taking care of your own priorities a priority,
others won't either.**

Thanks to you for reading this report.

Your time is valuable and I sincerely hope that you found this information to be of value – and that you can begin to see what’s possible for yourself *and* for your business as you get clearer on your priorities to create both the successful career and the fulfilling life you love. You deserve no less!

If you’re beginning to see that a shift is possible, I’d love to help you do that. I’d like to provide you with even more value by offering a complimentary 1-on-1 call with you where I’ll do a **Success Starts with You** strategy session for those who qualify.

- If you’re an established business owner, entrepreneur or manager who is ready to find greater success – as you define it - both at work and in life, this may be what you’re looking for.
- If you’re serious about creating a healthy, sustainable business or career – and a fulfilling life outside of the workplace - then you are just the kind of person I want to help. If you’d like an opportunity to see how some of what you’ve read in this report – and more – can be applied specifically to you, request a **Success Starts with You** strategy session here.

[Sign up for your Free Complimentary Strategy Session here](#)

- This session is a \$200 value.
- It only takes about 45-60 minutes

We’ll look at how to develop a strategy specifically tailored to your unique circumstances and goals so that you can create abundant success – as you define it - in your career as well as your life.

- If you’ve decided it’s time to make some shifts in your business and your life so that you find the fulfillment you seek
- If you are ready to make impact that you know is possible for you with your customers, your family and friends, in your community
- If you’re ready to experience greater health, happiness – and even to thrive – in all areas, then I invite you to register for a session today.

To Your Success,



[1] Kaizen was originally introduced to the West by Masaaki Imai in his book Kaizen: The Key to Japan’s Competitive Success in 1986. Today Kaizen is recognized worldwide as an important pillar of an organization’s long-term competitive strategy

[2] Abraham Hicks